



# NASA FIRST

2008-2009 Program  
Information



## Program Purpose

To provide “individual contributors” and “influence leaders” the opportunity to develop foundational leadership skills in the areas of Personal Effectiveness, Business Acumen, and Leading and Managing Others. This takes place in the context of working from an Agency perspective in service of the Agency’s Succession Management Strategy.

## Target Audience

GS-11 thru GS-12 “individual contributors” and “influence leaders” in science, engineering, and professional administrative positions with potential for greater leadership roles in the future



## Definitions

Individual Contributor - This role does not include any formally assigned supervisory or management responsibilities, but does include leadership preparation. Those in this role may currently lead critical aspects of the technical work of the Agency.

Influence Leader - This role is normally not “formally assigned” supervisory or management responsibilities. Individuals in this role span many GS levels including STs, SLs, and SES. Many of these individuals lead significant programs or projects contributing to the Agency’s objectives

Succession Management – NASA’s strategy to develop and maintain a Mission Capable workforce. It involves developing employee skills important to their current roles within the organization and preparing them to expand on those skills as they take on roles with greater responsibility.

## Basic Program Information

- Agency-wide leadership development program for GS 11-12 civil servants with at least 2 years of experience with NASA, term or permanent employees
- 1 year part-time program, including 4 training modules, shadowing, group projects, and individual development
- 42 participants max (Center slots are allocated based on percentage of target population)
- Addresses Personal Effectiveness, Business Acumen, and Leading Others dimensions of the Leadership Model

**Applicants must be a GS 11 or 12 at the time of application. No promotion is implied as part of the FIRST program, however, if a person is promoted during the program using merit principles, it will not impact their eligibility to participate.**



## Program Outcomes

Participants will:

- **Have an increased awareness of self, others, and the Agency**
- **Have a broader understanding of what it means to work for NASA**
- **Possess an increased understanding of what it means to be a fully functioning team member and leader**
- **Have a greater understanding of personal influence skills and how to use those skills effectively for NASA**
- **Be part of a cadre of future NASA leaders who will be inspired, motivated, and eager to play a vital role in the future of NASA and the Vision for Space Exploration**

# Candidate Criteria

**Individuals must demonstrate ability or have shown high potential in the following areas:**

- Personal Vision - Candidates shall demonstrate how they plan to contribute to NASA's goals through their personal leadership and influence.
- Leadership Potential – Candidates shall demonstrate the desire and ability to be a future leader within NASA.
- Personal Effectiveness - Candidates shall demonstrate their ability to garner the respect of peers and supervisors as well as the potential to lead through personal influence.
- Technical Skills & Knowledge - Candidates shall demonstrate a solid understanding of their discipline area including results of technical work and discipline training completed.

# Candidate Criteria (continued)

**Individuals must demonstrate ability or have shown high potential in the following areas:**

- Critical Thinking - Candidates shall demonstrate their ability to “think outside of the box” and apply critical and appropriate judgment to interpersonal and organizational issues.
- Teamwork - Candidates should demonstrate their ability to build and maintain trust and supportive relationships with others in a team environment.
- Open to Feedback – Candidates should demonstrate the ability to use feedback to continuously learn and enhance their performance. This includes the ability to offer constructive feedback to others.



# Program Schedule

Call to Centers – May 2008

Selections due to Agency – September 9, 2008

Module 1 - January 6-13, 2009 (WFF)

Module 2 – April 19-24, 2009 (HQ)

Module 3 – August 2-7, 2009 (MSFC)

Module 4 – December 6-11, 2009 (KSC)



## Program Requirements:

- **Have a mentor:**
  - **Mentoring guidelines include: 15/SES, been through Agency development (SESCDP/LDP), match mentors with individual needs**
- **Shadow 2-3 senior leaders**
- **Read two books on leadership and write book reports**
- **4 coaching sessions with program leaders**
- **Learning Group (small group) work and participation**
- **Full attendance at all 4 Modules**
- **Center Project**

**Time commitment over 1 year is about 8-10 hours per week with 22 days of formal training divided up between 4 Modules**

# Program Design

## Module 1: WFF

Agency: History, Vision, Mission;  
10 healthy centers

Self: Personal Effectiveness,  
Myers-Briggs, wellness, program  
IDP

Team: Group effectiveness, intro  
to team dynamics, intro to project  
management

## Module 2: NASA - DC

Agency: Major challenges for the  
Institution and the Mission  
Directorates, political environment

Self: Personal values, wellness,  
leadership resiliency

Team: Project Management;  
giving and receiving feedback

## Module 3: GRC

Agency: Major programs

Self: Influence, 540 Assessment,  
wellness

Team: Influence and negotiation  
skills, project sharing, feedback

## Module 4: JSC

Agency: Future state, sustaining  
the Vision; upcoming challenges  
and opportunities

Self: Career planning, IDP,  
coaching

Team: Center project wrap-up,  
Project Management wrap-up; team  
lessons learned

### Before Module 1

- Myers-Briggs Assessment
- Shakelton Book
- Center Project options
- Leadership self-assessment

### Between 1 and 2

- Choose and begin working  
with a Mentor
- Center Project work
- Shadow 1 senior leader

### Between 2 and 3

- 540 Assessment
- Influence Assessment
- Shadow 1 Senior Leader
- Center Project work

### Between 3 and 4

- Project wrap-up, present to  
Senior Leadership at  
Center
- Supervisor evaluation
- Program learning  
assessment
- Shadow 1 Senior Leader

## Additional Components

Center Tours

Senior Management /Industry Speakers

Center Networking opportunities/exposure to major programs & projects

Individual Development Plan Activities

# Application

**Application package includes:**

- **NASA FIRST Application Form**
  - **Participant Guidelines**
  - **Center IDP**
  - **Letter of Support from Supervisor**
  - **Center cover letter**
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- **Center selects candidates that best fit the criteria for the program by reviewing the applications, conducting formal interviews, and discussing Center Succession Planning Strategy**
  - **Center selection determines participation (no Agency-wide competition)**
  - **See Center POC for internal process and deadlines**

# Application Tips

The application form can be found on the NASA FIRST website at [http://www.leadership.nasa.gov/nasa\\_first/home.htm](http://www.leadership.nasa.gov/nasa_first/home.htm). No additional pages will be accepted. Answers must be completed on the form in no smaller than 9 pt font.

Supervisor's Letter of Support Must Include:

- Acknowledgement of the time commitment;
- Information regarding the candidate's demonstrated leadership potential;
- A re-entry strategy for the participant upon completion of the program. This should include information about how the supervisor and employee plan to utilize the learning and development gained from this program towards current and future mission related work.

# Supervisor's Commitment

By writing a letter of support for your employee you are acknowledging that:

- You understand the commitment necessary for participation in the NASA FIRST program.
- You will support and encourage 100% participation to complete program requirements.
- You have discussed this opportunity with your employee prior to their application.

Your support and guidance during the NASA FIRST program is essential. We have found that manager support is one of the highest rated elements participants list as contributing to their success and development while in the program